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## The Complexities of Home Cooking. Public Feasts and Private Meals Inside the Çatalhöyük House

### Summary

Feasting is generally a ritualized activity, and faunal and artistic evidence from Neolithic Çatalhöyük in central Anatolia support the symbolic importance and memorialization of feast animals. Both daily meals and feasting were constant presences within the household, suggesting that both were key components of household identity. However, the two phenomena were kept largely spatially segregated within the household. The Çatalhöyük evidence suggests that in the Central Anatolian Neolithic, daily meals and ritualized feasting played different – but both fundamental and arguably complementary – roles in specifically household identities. Both also take the broader community into account in terms of their household uses and placements, but in opposite ways.

Keywords: Near Eastern Archaeology; feasting; domestic meals; households; communality; Çatalhöyük; Neolithic.

Im Allgemeinen ist das Feiern von Festen eine ritualisierte Aktivität. Der Tierknochenbefund sowie künstlerische Zeugnisse der neolithischen Siedlung Çatalhöyük in Zentralanatolien unterstreichen die symbolische Bedeutung von Tieren, die für Feste geschlachtet wurden, sowie ihre Rolle in der Erinnerungskultur. Sowohl tägliche Mahlzeiten als auch Feste waren integrale Bestandteile von Haushalten, was darauf hindeutet, dass beide Schlüsselkomponenten einer dem jeweiligen Haushalt eigenen Identität waren. Jedoch wurden die beiden Phänomene innerhalb des Haushalts räumlich größtenteils getrennt gehalten. Der Befund aus Çatalhöyük legt nahe, dass im Neolithikum in Zentralanatolien tägliche Mahlzeiten und das ritualisierte Feiern von Festen zwar unterschiedliche – jedoch jeweils grundlegende und wohl auch sich ergänzende – Rollen speziell für die Identität von Haushalten spielten. Beide beziehen sich auch auf größere Teile der örtlichen Gemeinschaft, die sich innerhalb der Haushalte materialisieren. In dieser Hinsicht differieren Feste und Alltagsmahlzeiten jedoch stark.

Keywords: Vorderasiatische Archäologie; Verzehr; Feste; häusliche Mahlzeiten; Haushalt; Gemeinschaft; Çatalhöyük; Neolithikum.

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## 1 Introduction: Feasts and Domestic Consumption

The archaeological literature on food is rich in discussions of the definition of feasting, and of strategies for identifying feasting behavior in the archaeological record. Archaeologists investigate feasting in a tremendous range of cultures, and employ a wide variety of theoretical perspectives and methodologies.<sup>1</sup> However, virtually all of these studies present feasting as a segregated phenomenon, conceptualized both emically and etically as discrete from daily meals. In reality, while feasts are generally consciously distinguished from everyday meals, they are also closely related to such meals in form as well as in meaning: feasts commonly reiterate and enlarge the structure and contents of domestic meals, and the same food symbolism is relevant in both.<sup>2</sup> In other words, feasting is one aspect of a culture's food behavior; it is not an isolated phenomenon. Focusing solely on the *contrasts* between feasts and domestic consumption, therefore, and ignoring potential relationships between them, constitutes artificial isolation of one aspect of cultural behavior. The goal of this paper is to draw feasting and domestic consumption into conversation with each other, in hopes of creating a fuller and more complex view of life at the early agricultural site of Çatalhöyük in Turkey.

## 2 Feasts and Domestic Consumption at Neolithic Çatalhöyük

Çatalhöyük, a Neolithic 'megasite,' consists of two mounds – East and West – in central Anatolia's Konya Plain. The 13 ha mound of Çatalhöyük East was occupied from the late Aceramic into the Ceramic Neolithic, or ca. 7400–6000 BC calibrated; the later occupation of the West Mound lies beyond the scope of this paper. In the large farming village of the East Mound, small residential groups/families occupied rectilinear mud-brick houses crowded so densely together that they had to be entered through the roof via ladders.<sup>3</sup> Yet despite this extreme proximity, abutting houses lack shared or party

1 See Dietler and Hayden 2001; Wright 2004; Twiss 2008 and references therein.

2 Twiss 2007; Hastorf this volume.

3 Mellaart 1967; Hodder 2007.

walls, and cooking and storage facilities are found in each of them.<sup>4</sup> The site architecture thus suggests a careful balance between communal identity on the one hand, and household independence on the other. Additional data indicative of this balance include on the one hand a dearth of contemporary sites in the area, suggesting the social importance of communal living even at the megascale,<sup>5</sup> and on the other a total absence of communal buildings. These assorted data suggest a complex relationship between household and broader community, with independent households maintaining their individual identities even as they crowd themselves together in tight association.

Food offers a rewarding avenue for examining this complex relationship, because food activities are conducted primarily within basal social units: people farm, cook, and eat with those people who are most important in their lives.<sup>6</sup> Examining scales of food practice – household-level and community-level – can thus provide insight into the relative socioeconomic prominence of different scales of social interaction. It can also inform as to the articulation of these different scales of interaction.<sup>7</sup> This paper explores the interaction between domestic food storage and preparation and broader commensality, specifically feasts involving neighborhoods, kin groups, or potentially even the entire community.

To investigate domestic meals and feasting practices at Çatalhöyük, I use a variety of data sets: plant and animal remains deriving from the culinary processing and discard of plants and animals, architectural and artifactual evidence of food storage, and artistic representations of food animals. Particular attention is paid to burnt houses containing *in situ* plant/animal remains, which provide not only the architectural data retrievable from all structures, but also inform about emic placement of food stores and food residues. I acknowledge the possibility that primary deposits in burnt buildings reflect deliberate abandonment behavior rather than habitual practice. However, the composition and spatial patterning of ecofactual remains apparent in some of Çatalhöyük's burnt structures strongly suggests unintentional deposition and can be taken as a plausible reflection of actual practice.<sup>8</sup>

## 2.1 Evidence for Domestic Consumption at Çatalhöyük

Direct evidence for domestic *plant food* preparation – which is presumably closely related to the scale of consumption – comes from a series of *in situ* charred lenses deriving from individual plant processing events.<sup>9</sup> Recently excavated examples of such lenses were found not only in small, discrete firespots in midden areas, but also in what appears

4 E. g., Hodder and Cessford 2004.

5 Baird 2006; Bogaard, Charles, and Twiss 2010.

6 See also Bray this volume.

7 See also Otto this volume.

8 Twiss, Bogaard, Bogdan, et al. 2008.

9 Bogaard, Charles, Ertu, et al. 2007, 2011; Regan 2007; Bogaard, Charles, and Twiss 2010.

to be a house patio or yard area.<sup>10</sup> One of these lenses yielded pea pod fragments and peas (the byproducts of cleaning peas by hand before eating); others reflect episodes of hand-cleaning of glume wheat grain and perhaps crop fine sieving and hand-cleaning.<sup>11</sup> The small scale and discrete nature of these lenses indicates that restricted amounts of plant food were being processed in this house yard – several liters of peas or grain at the most – strongly suggesting plant preparation solely for domestic consumption.

A similar conclusion can be drawn from a botanical sample recovered from a ‘storage and recovery’ pit in the corner of a second, roughly contemporary building (Building 53, space 272). This sample appears to reflect small-scale winnowing and/or fine sieving of pounded glume wheat spikelets, prior to a household meal.<sup>12</sup> That such processing perhaps occurred in the relatively private<sup>13</sup> side rooms of individual houses is suggested by the association of a groundstone tool and a concentration of glume wheat spikelets in a third house, Building 77, as well as by a heavy concentration of wheat dehusking residues inside Building 45.<sup>14</sup>

Additional plausible evidence for small-scale plant food preparation comes in the form of discrete and diminutive deposits in larger middens. For example, Space 181, a midden area dating to the earliest levels of the site (Pre-Level XII), contains small, nutshell-rich deposits suggesting the shelling of only handfuls of nuts at a time. As noted by Demiregi, Charles, and Filipović,<sup>15</sup> we thus have evidence for the small-scale processing of both wild and cultivated plant foods, plausibly for individual households.

Finally, it is possible that certain features inside houses (e.g., basins) were used in plant food processing.<sup>16</sup> If so, they provide evidence for such processing as an indoor domestic activity. Furthermore, like the wheat spikelets and dehusking residues mentioned previously, these basins are often found in houses’ side rooms, implying pronounced internalization rather than mere spatial association with a particular structure. These basins are also not very large, which is again consistent with small-scale, household-level processing.<sup>17</sup>

Ample architectural evidence reinforces this impression of plant foods being used primarily on the domestic scale and in pronounced privacy. This is very apparent when we consider the evidence for plant food storage. We are fortunate at Çatalhöyük to have multiple stores of botanical remains that were charred *in situ*, which shed light on the spatial distribution and scale of storage in the village. Remains found inside burned buildings are especially useful, as previously mentioned.

10 Space 314 external to Building 65: Bogaard, Charles, and Twiss 2010.

11 Bogaard, Charles, Ertu, et al. 2007, 201; Bogaard, Charles, Livarda, et al. 2013; Longford 2010.

12 Bogaard, Charles, Livarda, et al. 2013.

13 Twiss, Bogaard, Charles, et al. 2009; Bogaard,

Charles, Livarda, et al. 2013, Fig. 1.

14 Bogaard, Charles, Livarda, et al. 2013.

15 Demiregi, Charles, and Filipović 2008.

16 Demiregi, Charles, and Filipović 2008.

17 Demiregi, Charles, and Filipović 2008.

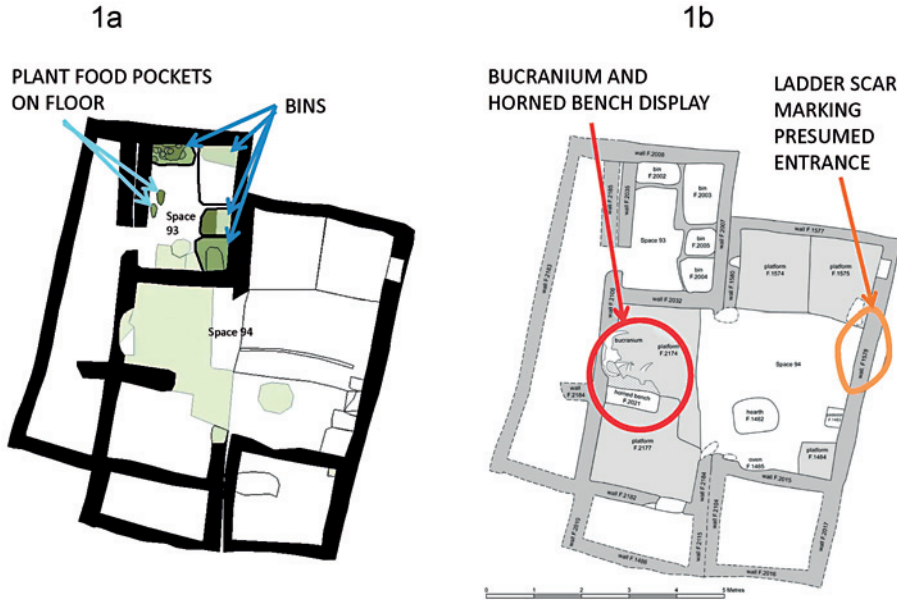


Fig. 1 (a) Densities of botanical remains in the eastern (main) and northern (side) rooms of Building 52 at Çatalhöyük, (b) Locations of ladder scar and bucranium display in Building 52. The western and southern side rooms of Building 52 were not in use at the time of the fire (Mackie 2008).

Of particular note on this score is burned Building 52. This building, which was excavated between 2005 and 2008, contained extensive *in situ* plant and animal remains; I will not describe them extensively here, as the house's architecture and contents have been published in some detail elsewhere,<sup>18</sup> but will merely summarize what we know.

Fig. 1a shows a GIS map of the distribution of botanical remains inside Building 52. While remains have been recovered from both the main and the side rooms of the house, *concentrations* of plant remains are limited to the bin-lined side room, Space 93. Very rich concentrations of plant foods were found in these bins, including free-threshing wheat grain below a spread of whole almonds in the northern bin, and several liters of peas in the south bin (along with numerous charred mouse pellets and burnt mouse bones, indicating an unfortunate infestation). Interestingly, while the eastern half of the central bin along the wall was filled with clay, its western half held over 30 liters of wild mustard seeds, probably used for their flavor and their oil. These seeds were hermetically sealed into the bin with a thick layer of very fine clay.<sup>19</sup>

18 Mackie 2008; Twiss, Bogaard, Bogdan, et al. 2008; Twiss, Bogaard, Charles, et al. 2009; Bogaard, Charles, Twiss, et al. 2009.

19 Twiss, Bogaard, Bogdan, et al. 2008; Twiss, Bogaard, Charles, et al. 2009.

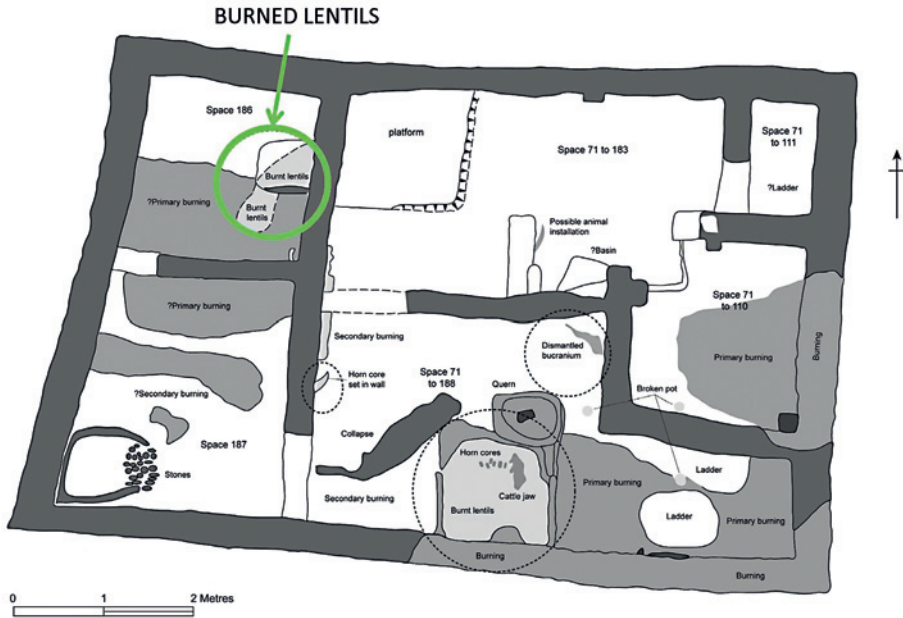


Fig. 2 Ecofactual distributions in Building 1.

Additional concentrations of plant foods are visible dotting the room outside the bins: these are cereal grain concentrations and more wild mustard seeds, the remains of bags or bundles of foodstuffs that at the time of the fire hung from the house's rafters. The pockets shown in Fig. 1a were found on the room's floor, but similar concentrations were found in the burnt debris above the floor layer, reinforcing the idea that stored material was falling from above.<sup>20</sup>

While Building 52's emphatic restriction of plant food stores to the side room is not universal at Çatalhöyük (see below), it does reflect a general pattern of botanical stores from well-sampled burned structures being concentrated in small side rooms.<sup>21</sup>

However, a few houses north of Building 52 lies another burned house, Building 1. Here, while concentrations of lentils, acorns, and wild mustard seeds were primarily found in side rooms, a bin-like feature in a central room contained a collection of lentils (Fig. 2). Admittedly, this bin feature's form and construction were unusual, and Building 1 did not end in a catastrophic fire as Building 52 did: only portions of the house were burned, in multiple and perhaps deliberate burning episodes.<sup>22</sup> It is possible, therefore, that lentil deposit in the main room may not reflect habitual storage practice: indeed,

20 Twiss, Bogaard, Bogdan, et al. 2008; Twiss, Bogaard, Charles, et al. 2009; Bogaard, Charles, Twiss, et al. 2009.

21 Bogaard, Charles, Twiss, et al. 2009; Fairbairn et al. (in press).

22 Cessford 2007, 118, 125–129.

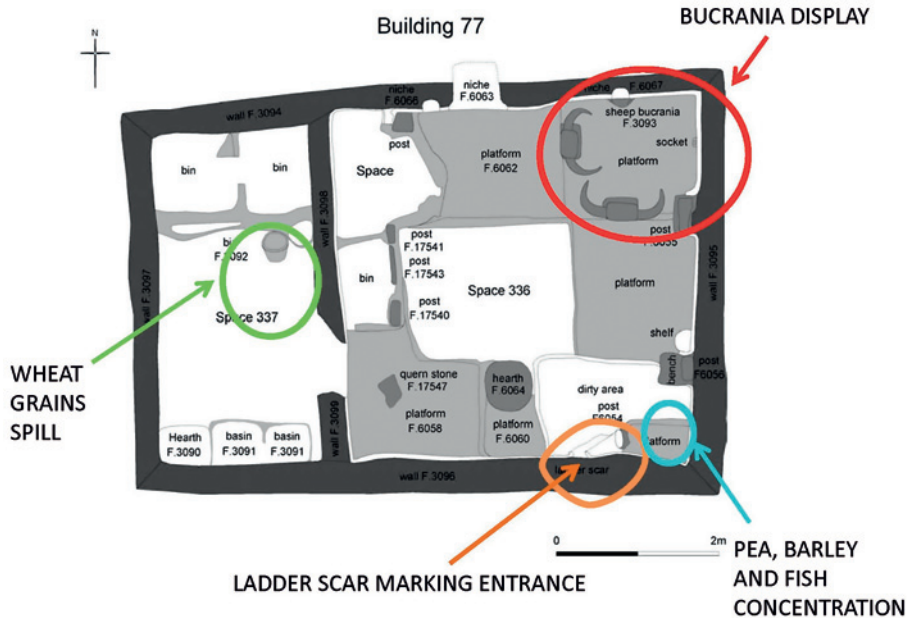


Fig. 3 Locations of plant food concentrations, ladder scar, and bucranium display in Building 77. Çatalhöyük Research Project.

the structure's excavator viewed the 'bin' contents, which also included a caprine scapula and at least 13 wild goat horns, as deliberate abandonment placements rather than *in situ* stores.<sup>23</sup>

Similarly problematic in terms of reflecting habitual storage practices are the remains from catastrophically burned Building 77, which lies in between Building 52 and Building 1, and burned Buildings 79 and 80, which are in a different area of the site. Excavated in the summer of 2008,<sup>24</sup> Building 77's side room contained partially processed cereal grain: pairs of hulled wheat grains still enclosed by glumes (Fig. 3). These grains, which lay in front of the room's bins, are not ready for consumption, but require additional threshing and winnowing/sieving.<sup>25</sup>

These side room botanical concentrations are consistent with the pattern observed in Building 52; most of the platform areas in Building 77's main space also accord with the Building 52 model in that they preserve only very low-density traces of plant use, presumably background noise.<sup>26</sup> However, Building 77's main room also yielded a deposit of cleaned peas and naked barley grain fused with small fish bones (cyprinids, 5–10cm

23 Cessford 2007, 479–482.

24 House and Yeomans 2008.

25 Bogaard, Charles, Ergun, et al. 2008; Bogaard,

Charles, and Twiss 2010.

26 Amy Bogaard, pers. comm. 2010.

long; some segments remained articulated [Fig. 3]).<sup>27</sup> These remains were found, without any apparent container, by the foot of the house entrance ladder. While storage in the main room is certainly a believable practice in pragmatic terms, it is hard to conceive of a regular practice involving mixing together peas and anchovy-sized fish and leaving them by the front entrance: whatever this pea deposit represents,<sup>28</sup> it is obviously not a standard storage deposit.<sup>29</sup>

A charcoal-rich deposit atop the floor of the main room of Building 80, meanwhile, yielded three seed clusters, including a concentration of ca. 200 pea seeds and an almost pure collection of cleaned barley grains. These seed concentrations may have been in pouches or sacks hung from the roof or they may have been kept on the floor in containers. Building 80's excavator suggests that these plant foods may have been stored in a wooden loft or other structure, whose burning produced the charcoal; alternatively, they may have been a deliberately placed abandonment deposit.<sup>30</sup> (A spread of dehusked glume wheat both inside and outside a bin in Building 79 may also be a deliberate scattering on the occasion of abandonment.)<sup>31</sup> In either case, their presence in the main room is not necessarily evidence of their storage there.

On the whole, then, we have extensive evidence for storage of plant foods in house side rooms; the evidence for main-room storage of plant foods is arguable. We emerge with a strong impression of distinctly private storage of plant foods: not just storage at the domestic level, but storage placed inside the most concealed and secure spaces inside houses.

To the extent that we can assess the scale of these secluded domestic stores, it appears that they were best suited to supporting only the actual residents of each house. Averaging out house structure bin capacities gives an estimate of 1200 liters, or 1.2 cubic meters: ethnographically, one cubic meter of staple goods feeds a family of five to seven people for one year.<sup>32</sup> At Çatalhöyük, we obviously cannot account for the size of stores in perishable containers, abandoned buildings, or even offsite, nor for the amount of food reserved for seed corn or for Halstead's "normal surplus."<sup>33</sup> However, we can say, based on comparison with regionally appropriate ethnographic parallels, that the existing evidence suggests that domestic food stores did not include significant surplus.<sup>34</sup>

In contrast to the plant food data, evidence of domestic meat storage or consumption is at present limited. In addition to faunal concentrations preserved in primary storage contexts, possible evidence for domestic meat use includes filleting cut marks

27 Neer et al. (in preparation).

28 Neer et al. (in preparation), while not excluding the possibility of the remains being a stored deposit, suggest that they represent a cooked pea and barley dish, in which fish, perhaps in dried form, supplied flavor as well as animal fat and protein.

29 Bogaard, Charles, Ergun, et al. 2008; Bogaard,

Charles, and Twiss 2010.

30 Regan 2010, 17.

31 Eddisford 2009, 22; Longford 2010.

32 Kramer 1982; Yalman 2005; Bogaard, Charles, Twiss, et al. 2009.

33 Halstead 1989.

34 Bogaard, Charles, Twiss, et al. 2009.



Body part	Number in an intact carcass	Number recovered inside Building 77	Building 77 remains as of expected
Cranium ( <i>Maxilla, Mandible</i> )	2	2	100.0
Axial Skeleton ( <i>Vertebrae, Scapula, Pelvis</i> )	7	5	71.4
Forelimb ( <i>Humerus, Radius, Ulna</i> )	10	3	30.0
Hindlimb ( <i>Femur, Patella, Tibia, Os malleolare</i> )	12	7	58.3
Feet ( <i>Carpals, Tarsals, Metapodia, Phalanges</i> )	36	26	72.2

Tab. 1 Sheep/goat body parts from Building 77 at Çatalhöyük: number of diagnostic zones in an intact carcass, and number of diagnostic zones recovered.

on bones (produced by stripping raw meat from the bone for cooking or preservation) and differential spatial representation of animal body parts. Filleting marks, which often reflect processing of animals for storage, can indicate that animals were not entirely consumed within a few days of slaughter; this accords with their use by groups of limited size such as households. Differential spatial representation of body parts suggests disbursement of slaughtered animals across houses and thus perhaps across households. (Refits of skeletal articulations across houses would provide ideal evidence for such disbursement, but no such refits have as yet been identified at Çatalhöyük.)

Collections of animal remains found inside Çatalhöyük storage areas reflect stockpiling of raw materials for bone and antler working far more clearly than they do amassing of food supplies. On the floor of Building 52's storeroom (Space 93), for example, lay a cluster consisting of 36 caprine metapodia, six pieces of antler, and pieces of boar- and cattle-sized ribs. The metapodia were surely intended for working (bone points made from caprine metapodia are ubiquitous at the site), and at least two of the antler pieces already show signs of working. Inside the room's storage bins, meanwhile, were an antler tool; another large piece of worked antler; two more long chunks of antler beam, one with its tines removed prior to working; several lengthy bone fragments from large animals, many of which were worked; a collection of at least three mandibles from infantile wild boars and one adult boar mandible; and assorted fragmentary bones in varying

stages of processing.<sup>35</sup> Domestic storage of useful animal materials is unmistakable in this room; domestic storage of edible meat is plausible but not conclusive, with the best evidence for it consisting of several large caprine fragments in one of the bins, including a more or less complete innominate, a largely complete scapula, a distal humerus, and a proximal radius and ulna that articulate with each other but not with the humerus.

0.2% of the Çatalhöyük faunal remains bear cut marks; of these, approximately 20% are filleting marks. The scarcity of cut marks does not mean that animals were left unprocessed: it may be due to skilled butchers who avoided nicking the bones and thus dulling their stone knives, or to general reliance on sharp obsidian tools that allowed precise cutting around bone.<sup>36</sup> Nonetheless, with only 0.04% of faunal remains at Çatalhöyük displaying filleting marks, little cut mark evidence points towards domestic meat storage at Çatalhöyük.

As for the distribution of animal body parts on site, burnt Building 52 contained all caprine body parts in approximately anatomical proportions. This suggests that either this individual household was consuming entire animals rather than sharing them with other households,<sup>37</sup> or it was conducting symmetrical sharing through time. In burned Building 77 (Tab. 1), all caprine body segments are again present; the moderate variation between their proportions is probably due to a small sample size combined with density-mediated attrition.<sup>38</sup> Anatomically equitable distributions of caprine remains generally characterize middens across the site.<sup>39</sup> Body part distribution patterns are thus generally consistent with single-household consumption of entire caprines, which implies that domestic storage of some meat was likely. However, as with the rest of the faunal data, alternative explanations are also possible, and household meat storage cannot be securely demonstrated.

## 2.2 Evidence for Feasting at Çatalhöyük

I turn now from evidence for domestic food practice to evidence for larger-scale food activities, specifically feasting. I have elsewhere outlined a series of common material correlates of feasting<sup>40</sup> for use in its identification in archaeological contexts. I rely here on these correlates as evidence for feasting at Çatalhöyük. Four are of particular importance:

35 Twiss, Bogaard, Bogdan, et al. 2008; Twiss, Bogaard, Charles, et al. 2009.

36 Dewbury and Russell 2007; Russell and Martin 2005, 85.

37 Demirergi, Charles, and Filipović 2008.

38 That density-mediated attrition is a factor in this assemblage is demonstrated by patterns of survival

within elements: for example, both of the caprine humeral fragments in Building 77 are distal ends – (which are far denser than proximal humeral ends) and all of the femoral fragments are proximal ends (which are denser than distal femora).

39 Demirergi, Charles, and Filipović 2008.

40 Twiss 2008.

- First, consumption of rarely eaten and frequently symbolically important foods
- Second, consumption of notably large animals
- Third, minimal processing of animal remains (especially when intensive processing is the norm)
- Fourth, display of commemorative items

Following these criteria, there is extensive evidence at Çatalhöyük for feasting, especially in the case of aurochs, red deer, and perhaps equids and wild boar.

Aurochs, or wild cattle, constitute on average 24.2% (NISP = 17,133)<sup>41</sup> of speciable faunal specimens recovered from Neolithic levels in Çatalhöyük's East Mound.<sup>42</sup> These animals, each of which would have provided hundreds of kilos of meat,<sup>43</sup> are known to have been quite dangerous to hunt. Furthermore, whereas intensive processing of bones was the norm at Çatalhöyük, not just for marrow but for grease as well,<sup>44</sup> many aurochs remains were not heavily broken up.

Finally, aurochs are iconographically central at the site (as indeed they are throughout the southwest Asian Neolithic). Cattle are the most common animal represented in the zoomorphic figurine assemblage, and while we have only two certain examples of bulls on wall paintings (plus one more animal that may be a bull), both are among the most impressive paintings at the site: huge cynosures surrounded by smaller figures of humans and other animals.<sup>45</sup> Most famously, cattle horns and cranial remains (bucrania) were prominently installed in some houses.<sup>46</sup>

Red deer, another large species, are also standard artistic subjects at the site,<sup>47</sup> and their remains are well-represented in an off-mound deposit that has been identified as the residues of ceremonial activities.<sup>48</sup> Their antlers have been found in special deposits and perhaps architectural installations as well.<sup>49</sup>

Equid proportions are slightly elevated among the less processed deposits commonly identified as feasting remains, and wild boar remains are periodically used in special or ritual contexts.<sup>50</sup> Additional animal taxa may have been used as feasting foods as well, but the evidence is not clear at present.

We do not have good evidence for feasting with plant foods. Part of this lack, such as the dearth of large-scale botanical concentrations, may be attributable to taphonomic

41 Cattle provide 10.0% of the Neolithic diagnostic zones (DZs: see Russell and Martin 2005 for methodological details).

42 Russell, Twiss, et al. (in preparation).

43 Goring-Morris and Horwitz 2007.

44 Russell and Martin 2005.

45 Russell and Meece 2005, Tab. 14.1.

46 House and Yeomans 2008; Regan 2010; Twiss and

Russell 2010, 17–18; see also Figs. 1 and 3 in this paper.

47 Russell and Meece 2005, Tab. 14.1.

48 Russell and Martin 2005.

49 Russell and Martin 2005, 25; House and Yeomans 2008, 39; Russell and Twiss 2008, 155.

50 Russell and Martin 2005.

factors. However, we also lack evidence for plants as symbolically prominent foods or as displayed items. Ethnographic examples of plant art and decorated plant food containers abound;<sup>51</sup> Çatalhöyük's bins are plain, and its iconography surprisingly plant-poor.<sup>52</sup> It is entirely possible that plants were consumed at Çatalhöyük feasts, albeit perhaps in a secondary, minimally celebrated role, analogous to that of the mashed potatoes that accompany the iconic American Thanksgiving turkey. However, by far the strongest evidence of feasting we have involves animals, particularly aurochs, and it is on their remains that I focus.

As is well known, feasting is a generally a ritualized activity, not just in the secular (i. e., formalized repetitive performance), but in the ideological (i. e., religious) sense. Indeed, Dietler<sup>53</sup> argues that feasts are intrinsically "a particularly powerful form of ritual activity" because food and drink are material representations of a society's cultural standards and relations of production and preparation. Communal consumption of food and drink thus constitutes literal incorporation – embodiment – of social norms, in a shared public setting. The symbolic potency of this activity is commonly reinforced with musical, dramatic, or dance performances that unite the symbolic with the sensual and fuse ritual with entertainment.<sup>54</sup>

As previously noted, such ritually significant feasts are often commemorated through display. Some commemorative displays are artistic depictions of feast foods; others are trophies from the feasts themselves – in several cases, the skulls and horns of the animals consumed.<sup>55</sup>

At Çatalhöyük, therefore, bucrania, and arguably other cachings of animal parts and artworks depicting food species, are plausibly viewed as not merely abstract symbolizations of the ritual importance of feast species, but as concrete memorializations of specific feasts. In other words, when we see a bucranium, we are not merely looking at a symbol of "Aurochs are ritually important;" rather, we are looking at the remains of an animal that was actually consumed at a specific event: a trophy commemorating a particular feast. The installation of such an item, or of a horned bench, or a boar jaw, would thus memorialize a particular *communal* occasion.

Furthermore, presumably the individual or group who, at the end of a feast, retained or received an aurochs skull or horns for display would have been someone who played a prominent, even central, role in that feast. The host, the honoree, the hunter who originally slew the animal: the trophy would have gone to someone who had, in some

51 Bogaard, Charles, Twiss, et al. 2009, Fig. 9.

52 Mellaart 1967 (161–163, Plate 41, Fig. 46) claims that the quatrefoils depicted in a painting from Shrine VLB.8 are stylized flowers, but this identification is extremely arguable. He does note that there are no depictions of the site's most important crops, wheat and barley (p. 163).

53 Dietler 2001, 72.

54 E. g., Birket-Smith 1953, 108; Rappaport 1968; W. Powers and M. Powers 1984; Verbicky-Todd 1984; Kahn 1986; Colegrove 1990; Garine 1996; DeBoer 2001; Dietler 2001; Kirch 2001; Wiessner 2001.

55 Twiss 2008, 424.

way, earned it. Thus, installation of a bucranium or trophy bones memorializes not just *a* feast, but a moment of prestige, of social prominence in the general community. These festal remains constitute “social storage” not in the economic sense,<sup>56</sup> but in the sense of curating prestige, of demonstrating status in the community. This status may have been convertible into economic benefit, of course, but such conversion cannot be taken for granted.

It is important to reiterate that no temples, shrines, or other communal buildings have been found at Çatalhöyük (unlike at later southwest Asian sites such as those discussed by D’Anna and by Otto, this volume).<sup>57</sup> As a result, all of the site’s bucrania and trophy bones, all of these memorializations of communal feasts are placed within homes. In other words, “social storage” of feasts and ritual activities was domestically curated. Furthermore, these memorial trophies were installed in house locations where they would be the first things that struck the eye of entering residents and visitors (e. g., Buildings 52 and 77: see Figs. 1b and 3). Whereas domestic food stores were kept in side rooms, out of the sight lines of casual visitors, bucrania, horned pillars, and horned benches we see placed as prominently as possible. They were situated so as to display the house’s contributions to communal feasts as effectively as possible.

### 3 Discussion

With memorialization of communal feasts inside houses – domestic curation of feasts and ritual activities – we see feasting memorabilia in the same general household context as domestic food stores and cooking accoutrements. Both family meals and communal feasts were constant physical presences within at least some households. (Most houses were cleaned out completely at abandonment, including their installations, so it cannot be known what proportion of households owned feasting trophies.) The physical presence in the houses of both domestic and feast foods suggests that both intramural meals and ritualized community feasts were key components of *specifically household* identity.

However, domestic food stores and feast food remains were spatially segregated within the household: one kept secluded, the other on display. Whereas bucrania and other festal remains were placed to announce particular identities to others, plausibly as claims of power and prestige (“status symbols”), quotidian food stores were emphatically not on exhibit. Instead, they were largely kept in side rooms, out of easy sight: a

56 Halstead 1981; O’Shea 1981; Halstead and O’Shea 1982.

57 The apparent absence of communal buildings and large open spaces inside the village raises the question of where community feasts might have been held. No concrete answer is available, but logic as

well as the off-mound discovery of probably ceremonial faunal remains, including very high proportions of cattle (Russell and Martin 2005), suggest that the site periphery may have been a preferred location.

practice constituting the opposite of wealth display or public status assertion. The placement of both feasting remains and domestic foods thus took the broader community into account, but in opposite ways, with one placed to draw attention and the other to hide from it.

It is important not to overstate the case: a few houses do have bins in their main rooms, and some domestic food preparation clearly took place out-of-doors, producing the small botanical lenses discussed earlier in this paper. However, of eleven fully excavated and well-documented house occupations, ten have bins only in side spaces,<sup>58</sup> while the eleventh has bins in both side and main rooms. As for the out-of-doors botanical lenses, having one's neighbors witness individual small cooking episodes is quite socially distinct from showing them one's accumulated food stores: the difference is analogous to spending some money in front of someone as opposed to showing them your bank account.

The aggregated evidence about domestic meals and feasts thus suggests that both were important to household identity, and furthermore, that each household had both its private and its communally advertised identities. There are even some indications that these private and public identities may have been emically perceived as discrete phenomena, as they are today in our society. This interpretation can be advanced not only because of the spatial segregation of the domestic food stores and the communal food trophies. In such a case, one could still have household food stores supporting village-level identities: for example, 'funding' of feasts via disbursement of domestic food surpluses.

As noted before, however, there is no evidence for storage of large-scale food surpluses at Çatalhöyük, and thus no obvious way for a house to accumulate private wealth to fund public display. Furthermore, while abandonment clearing-outs prevent one from using the amount of trophy bones found inside a house as reliable evidence for the amount of feasting memorabilia originally there, a rough comparison shows no correlation between the quantity of a house's domestic storage space available and its quantity of animal installations or artwork.

58 Bogaard, Charles, Twiss, et al. 2009, Tab. 5. This tally excludes houses which lack bins, and includes one

house where bins are located at the side of a single room.

Area	Building	No. bins	Bin location	Bin capacity (liters) <sup>†</sup>	Side room area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Animal iconography	In situ food / animal instal- lations on display	Reference*
	45	2	side room	318	11.8	0	0	Çatalhöyük Archive Report 2004
	48	poor preser- vation			3.3	0	0	Çatalhöyük Archive Report 2004
	49	side room	side room	1348	n/a	0	0	Çatalhöyük Archive Report 2004, 2006; D. Eddisford pers. comm. July 28 2008
	52	4	side room	1225	10.0	0	Main room; bucranium; horned bench	Çatalhöyük Archive Report 2005
	52, final phase (Building 51)	0	n/a	0	n/a		0	Çatalhöyük Archive Report 2005
	55	3	side room	536	5.0		0	Çatalhöyük Archive Report 2005
	57	poor preser- vation	–	–	6.0		0	Çatalhöyük Archive Report 2005
	58	poor preser- vation	–	–	6.7	0	0	Çatalhöyük Archive Report 2005, 2006
	59	10	side rooms	2688	24.4	0	0	Çatalhöyük Archive Report 2007
	59 minus ? exter- nal bins	7	side rooms	673	–			
	64	poor preser- vation	–	–	13.6	0	0	Çatalhöyük Archive Report 2006
North	1, phase 1.2B	1	side room	115		0	0	(Cessford 2007)

<sup>†</sup> Calculated using a bin height: diameter ratio of 1.1.

\* All Archive Reports are available online at [www.catal-hoyuk.com/archive\\_reports](http://www.catal-hoyuk.com/archive_reports).

Area	Building	No. bins	Bin location	Bin capacity (liters) <sup>Δ</sup>	Side room area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Animal iconography	In situ food / animal instal- lations on display	Reference*
North	1, phase 1.2C	2	side and main	711	–	0	Main room: Horn core embedded in wall	(Cessford 2007)
	1, Phase 1.4	0	–	–	–	0	0	(Cessford 2007)
	5, Phase B	6	side room	1148	14.7	0	0	(Cessford 2007)
	6 (E.VIII.10)	3	side room	1023	9.8	0	–	(Farid 2007 46, 57)
	18 (E.X.8)	4	side room	375	4.2	0	–	Farid 2007
South	23 (E.X.1)	[1] side room unex- cavated	[main room]	–	5.6	0	Main room: 8 bucrania/ovicrania <sup>‡</sup>	(Mellaart 1964, 70–3; Mellaart 1967, 104; Russell and Meece 2005, 11; Farid 2007)
	65	5	side room	1363	5.5	0	0	Çatalhöyük Archive Report 2007
	17, Phase B	[4] side room unex- cavated	[main room]	–	9.2	0	0	(Farid 2007)
	17, Phase C	side room unexcavated	–	–	9.2	0	0	(Farid 2007)
	17, Phase D	side room unexcavated	–	–	9.2	0	0	(Farid 2007)
	17, Phase E	side room unexcavated	–	–	9.2	0	0	(Farid 2007)
	2, Phase 2.2	side room unexcavated	–	–	2.0	0	0	(Farid 2007)
Average <sup>‡</sup>				986				

<sup>‡</sup> These installations are reported in Mellaart 1967; it is not clear whether there were actual skulls inside.  
<sup>Δ</sup> The average excluding the questionable external bins associated with Building 59 is 803 m<sup>3</sup>.

Tab. 2 Spatial distribution of functional vessel classes at Ubaid Kenan Tepe.



Tab. 2 is a chart of houses with well-documented architectural data. The green highlights show houses where the storage capacity is above average; the orange show houses with animal installations; the purple marks a house that is in the top three in both respects. The overlap between the two categories precludes dichotomous identification of some houses as ‘feasting houses’ and others as ‘subsistence houses.’ The overlap is limited: there is no clear correlation, either positive or negative, between feasting memorabilia and food storage capacity. These data are imperfect, but in their limited fashion they are again consistent with a lack of economic correlation between domestic and communal meals.

This apparent lack of correlation has important potential implications. The first has to do with the role of storage in early agricultural economies. As noted in Bogaard et al.,<sup>59</sup> private storage has often been viewed as the means through which “households formally took on the risks and rewards of producing for their own use (see also Banning 2003; Flannery [1972 and] 2002; Rollefson 1997).” Absence of a correlation between household economic goods (as measured in food stores) and household prestige markers (as measured in festal trophies) raises the possibility that social rewards (accrual of political capital, enhancement of interhousehold inequality) were neither a key motivation for, nor a strong result of, early Anatolian domestic storage. Economic risk reduction was its primary goal. This model echoes that advanced by Halstead for Neolithic Greece<sup>60</sup> in viewing surplus production as a fundamentally important economic insulator for early farmers. It also extends his point<sup>61</sup> that economic success does not necessarily lead to, or correspond with, social distinction. Halstead noted that *institutionalized* inequality will probably not occur without lengthy periods of economic imbalance; the Çatalhöyük data suggest that small-scale imbalances may not inevitably cause even temporary inequality.

Alternatively, the lack of correlation raises the possibility that different households undertook different strategies to secure their food supply: some emphasized physical storage of edibles, others focused more on social interactions that would oblige other households to provide for them in times of scarcity (“social storage” in the economic sense).<sup>62</sup> Certainly neither strategy could exclude the other, but individual households could have assessed their agricultural assets and their members’ skill sets and slanted their food strategies accordingly. It must be reiterated, however, that both this possibility and the previous one are predicated on a correlation limited by both the sample size of fully excavated, well-preserved and well-documented houses, as well as by the Çatalhöyük tradition of house clearing-outs at abandonment.

59 Bogaard, Charles, Twiss, et al. 2009.

60 Halstead 1989 and this volume.

61 Halstead 1989, 79.

62 E.g., Halstead 1989, 73–75, 79.

Finally, the apparent structural segregation of domestic meals vs. feasts is interesting, as ethnographically the two are commonly very closely related.<sup>63</sup> Despite the widespread tendency in the archaeological literature to present domestic meals and feasts as contrasting rather than dialectically related phenomena, important structural as well as social relationships commonly exist between smaller and larger-scale consumption events.

Structural echoes between the two are well illustrated by Mary Douglas's account of British meals,<sup>64</sup> which she described as "ordered in scale of importance and grandeur through the week and the year. The smallest, meanest meal metonymically figures the structure of the grandest, and each unit of the grand meal figures again the whole meal – or the meanest meal." In other words, the feast's structure (a central protein accompanied by vegetable side dishes) echoed that of everyday meals. A feast was a scaled-up, expanded version of a normal dinner, perhaps including some moderately atypical foods and unusually large quantities of even the prosaic ones, but it was organized and conceptualized in clear relation to quotidian domestic meals. Douglas further emphasized that, "The perspective created by these repetitive analogies invests the individual meal with additional meaning."<sup>65</sup>

We do not, based on the evidence outlined here, see such repetitive analogies in use at Çatalhöyük. This does not necessarily mean that such analogies did not exist. The possibility always exists that the perceived dramatic separation between daily meals and feasts is a product of archaeological methodology. In the absence of documentary evidence, archaeological identification of feasting is accomplished primarily by looking for food practices distinct from the norm. Thus, the more that feasting foods or behaviors echo daily practice, the less likely we are to be able to identify them archaeologically. Using current feasting criteria, then, we cannot assess the extent to which Çatalhöyük feasts involved common foods, cooking methods, or locations. As a result we undoubtedly miss the full complexities of the relationship between daily meals and feasts in the Central Anatolian Neolithic.

Still, at Çatalhöyük, in a single house's food remains, we see plans for the future as well as commemoration of the past; we see domestic economic stores as well as ritualized social ones. The degree to which these different stores are kept separate may have differed somewhat between structures, along with the amount of each kind of storage. However, the general pattern appears clear: small-scale food supplies for the house, kept in side rooms out of public view, versus larger-scale commemorations of communal consumption, displayed prominently. We see surprisingly little evidence for socioeconomic interaction between the two modes of consumption. However, both the domestic stores and the festal trophies display consideration of the broader community in terms of their

63 E. g., Halstead this volume

65 Douglas 1975, 257–258.

64 Douglas 1975, 257–258.

use and placement – and in the end, both presumably played fundamental, and arguably complementary, roles in specifically household identities.

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